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LANGUAGE LESSONS

PACKET



CHINA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS PACKET!

*RETURN TO YOUR TEACHER WHEN
FINISHED WITH LESSONS!*



Lesson 1: Thank You!

谢谢你。Xiè xie nǐ.

LESSON NOTES

Today's lesson covered a phrase there is no excuse not bring with you to China. In Chinese there are several ways to express ones gratitude; however by far the most common phrase used to express ones thanks is xiè xie (Thank you.). This is undoubtedly the phrase of gratitude you will here the most throughout your journeys, and conveniently the easiest to pronounce.

As Chinese is a tonal language, it is important to correctly pronounce the tones, as an incorrect pronunciation of a tone can change the meaning of a word and in turn, the meaning of the phrase. In the case of xiè xie, however, the phrase is used so frequency that it is likely no matter how badly you mispronounce the tones, this expression of gratitude will be understood. The tones for xiè xie are 4th and no tone respectively. Chinese characters have meanings, and the character 谢 (xiè) means thanks, to thank. As the phrase Xiè xie. consists of two of the same characters, it literally means, "Thank(s), thank(s)." However, it is translated as "Thank you."

Xiè xie nǐ. (Thank you.), or the politer version Xiè xie nín. (Thank you.[formal]), are common variations of the phrase Xiè xie. (Thank you.). In both of these phrases xiè xie is followed by the word for you, nǐ (you) or the politer version nín (you, formal). The literal meaning of these phrases are closer to their English counterpart "Thank you." as both phrases includes the word you.

Another polite way to express one's gratitude is the phrase, Duō xiè. (Thank you so much.) which literally means "Many thanks." or "A lot of thanks." The components of this sentence are duō (many) and xiè (to thank). Literally many thanks, but translated as "Thank you very much." The tones for this phrase are the 1st tone, the flat tone, and 4th tone, the falling tone, respectively.

Finally there is a phrase that expresses one's utmost gratitude. This phrase is Wǒ hěn gǎn xiè. (Thank you so much.) which literally means "I very feel thanks." but is translated as "Thank you so much." This phrase is reserved for very special occasions, such as when someone does something extremely kind or particularly helpful.

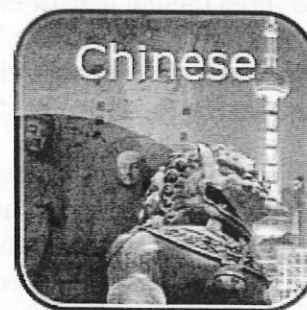
As mentioned previously, the tones in Chinese are extremely important. In the phrase Wǒ hěn gǎn xiè. (Thank you so much.) The first three characters in this sentence are 3rd tone, the rising falling tone. When there are two consecutive 3rd tones, the first 3rd tone changes to the 2nd tone, the rising tone, while the second 3rd tone remains 3rd tone.

For example, the word wǒ (I, me) is 3rd tone; the word hěn (very) is also 3rd tone. However, when combined to form the phrase wǒ hěn, the first 3rd tone becomes a second tone.



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A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!



Lesson 2: You're Welcome!

不客气。Bú kèqì.

LESSON NOTES

Basic etiquette is a common characteristic shared by societies throughout the world, and China is no exception. In fact, the Chinese are exceptionally hospitable, and phrases of gratitude and those related are used at an extremely high frequency. During your travels in China, it is more probable you will hear, rather than use, one of the phrases for "You're welcome."

In Chinese there are multiple ways to acknowledge and respond to an expression of gratitude. Again, as you will be using thank you repeatedly, there is a good chance you will come into contact with all three variations of "You're welcome." The following phrases are all frequently used, with usage depending on the speaker's style rather than other factors such as politeness level, etc.

Bú yòng xiè. (You're welcome.)

The phrase Bú yòng xiè. (You're welcome.) literally means "No need for thanks." or "No need for your thanks." Looking at the components of the sentence, bu is a negation marker. Yong means need/necessary, and xie is thank/thanks. This phrase can be translated literally into a colloquial English expression "No need for thanks." The tone for bù is the 4th tone; however, when bù is followed by another 4th tone, the tone changes from 4th tone, the falling tone, to the 2nd tone, the rising tone.

For example:

Bùhǎo (not good) is 4th tone and 2nd tone, and as the tone following bù is not 4th tone, bù remains 4th tone.

Bú yòng (no need/not necessary) is 4th tone and 2nd tone, and as the tone following bú is 4th tone, the tone changes from 4th tone, the falling tone, to the 2nd tone, the rising tone.

Bú kèqì. (You're welcome.)

The phrase Bú kèqì. literally means "Don't be polite." This phrase also begins with bu (the negation marker), which precedes kèqì (polite). Similar to the phrase Bú yòng xiè. (You're welcome.), the tone for bú in this phrase changes from 4th tone, the falling tone, to the 2nd tone, the rising tone, as bù is followed by another 4th tone.

Méi shì. (It's nothing.)



Lesson 3: This Please

请给我这个。Qǐng gěi wǒ zhège.

LESSON NOTES

China is a large and diverse country. In addition to the many places to see and visit, there are also many foods to try and goods to buy! However, in order to sample these new tastes and capitalize on some of the draw-dropping deals you are sure to come across, you must be able to ask for what you want. In China there are many street vendors, shops, stores, restaurants and other locals where you can practice the phrase Qǐng gěi wǒ [something]. (Please give me [something].), which is commonly used when asking for something.

When asking for something in Chinese, you need to include the verb to give and

the pronoun for the person receiving the object. The phrase used to accomplish this

is Qǐng gěi wǒ [something]. (Please give me [something].), with the "something" desired positioned at the end of the sentence.

Compared to its English counterpart phrase, "[something] please." the phrase used to ask for something in Chinese is relatively complex as the receiver of the object, the indirect object, must be included. In English, the same request can be accomplished by identifying the "something" desired and flowing it with "please." (If it is just one thing, an indefinite article would be needed too.) The difference is exemplified in the following example:

English: A Big Mac please.

Chinese: Qǐng gěi wǒ jùwábà. (Please give me a Big Mac.)

As it is highly unlikely that you will know the word for each "something" you come to desire, using the physical location of the "something" you want to communicate this is an extremely useful tactic. For something located nearby, you can refer to the thing with the word zhège (this). Therefore, to ask for something nearby you can use the phrase Qǐng gěi wǒ zhège. (This please.) For something further away, there is the phrase Qǐng gěi wǒ nàge. (Please give me that.)

The first three characters in this sentence are 3rd tone, the rising-falling tone. When there are two consecutive 3rd tones, the first 3rd tone changes to the 2nd tone, the rising tone, while the second 3rd tone remains 3rd tone. For example, the word nǐ (you) is 3rd tone, and the word hǎo is also 3rd tone. However, when combined to form the phrase Ní hǎo. (Hello.) The first 3rd tone becomes a 2nd tone.



Lesson 4: Basic Greetings

你好吗。Nǐ hǎo ma?

LESSON NOTES

In Chinese there are several basic greetings, with usage dependent on the time of day. However, there is one universal phrase that can be used regardless of the time of day and is more than appropriate for any social situation you may find yourself in. This universal phrase is Nǐ hǎo ma? (How are you?) The components of this phrase are nǐ (you), hǎo (good), and ma (a question-marker indicating that the sentence is a question), and this phrase literally means "You good?" The ma is sometimes omitted resulting in the greeting Nǐ hǎo. (Hello.)

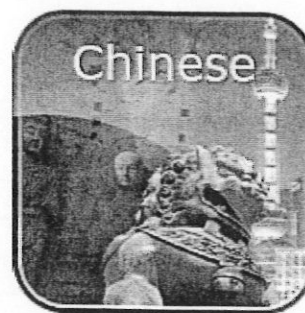
The first two words in this sentence are 3rd tone, the rising-falling tone. When there are two consecutive 3rd tones, the first 3rd tone changes to the 2nd tone, the rising tone, while the second 3rd tone remains 3rd tone. The word nǐ (you) is 3rd tone, and the word hǎo is also 3rd tone. However, when combined to form the phrase Nǐ hǎo. (Hello.) The first 3rd tone becomes a 2nd tone, Nǐ hǎo.-> Ní hǎo., and the phrase is pronounced 2nd (Ní), 3rd tone (hǎo), no tone (ma).

To increase the politeness level of this statement for instances when you want to show the utmost respect, simply replace nǐ (you) with its formal counterpart nín (you, formal). Nín hǎo ma? (How are you? [formal]). This simple substitution increases the formality and politeness level of the sentence.

In Chinese the phrase Zǎo shang hǎo. (Good morning.) is used in the morning. Literally this phrase means "morning good," and is translated as Good morning. The components of this phrase are zǎo (morning), shang (up) and hǎo (good). Together zǎoshang means morning, and this is followed good (hǎo).

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
你好吗。	Nǐ hǎo ma?	How are you?
早上好。	Zǎo shang hǎo.	Good morning.
您好吗。	Nín hǎo ma?	How are you? (formal)



Lesson 5: Goodbye

再见。Zài jiàn.

LESSON NOTES

In Chinese there are several parting greetings; however, there is one universal phrase that can be used for almost every situation. This universal phrase is Zài jiàn (See you again.). Literally this phrase means, "Again meet." The components that make up this phrase are zài (again) jiàn (meet), and both tones of the words in this sentence are 4th tone, the falling tone. The word jiàn (meet) appears in multiple parting greetings. For example, there is the parting phrase Míngtiān jiàn. (See you tomorrow.) In this phrase, the word zài (again) is replaced with míngtiān (tomorrow), forming the phrase, "See you tomorrow." Jiàn (to meet) doesn't change, and can be used as the basis for forming other parting phrases. For example, if you are meeting your friend at 4 o'clock you can say, Sì-diǎn jiàn. (See you at 4 o'clock.) In short, when used in a parting phrase, jiàn (meet) means "See you," but in Chinese this cannot stand alone. In order to complete the phrase, one must specify time when they will see each other again. If there is a specific time or a general idea of when the two parties will meet next, that time can be used and precedes jiàn (meet).

Specific time (4:30): Sì-diǎn jiàn. (See you at 4 o'clock.)

General time (tomorrow): Míngtiān jiàn. (See you tomorrow.)

If the time of the next meeting is not known, zài jiàn (See you again.) can be used.

In English, the position of first part of the phrase, "See you," is fixed, while what follows changes: "See you tomorrow." "See you tonight." "See you at 2." This is the opposite in Chinese, as the first part of the phrase changes, while the latter part, jiàn, is fixed.

In Chinese Wān ān. (Good night!) is used as a final parting phrase at night or before going to bed. The words for evening (wān) and peaceful (ān) are paired, meaning peaceful night. This is a common greeting before turning in for the night.

PHRASES

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
再见。	Zài jiàn.	See you (later).
明天见。	Míngtiān jiàn.	See you tomorrow.
晚安。	Wǎn ān.	Good night.



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Lesson 7: I Don't Understand

我不明白。Wǒ bù míngbái.

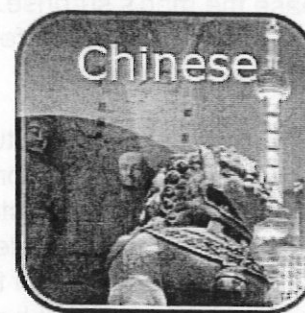
LESSON NOTES

"I don't understand" is going to be a very useful phrase because most of the time, maybe even almost 100% of the time, you won't understand. The Chinese language sounds very different from English and in the beginning it will be very difficult to get your ear used to it. Michael himself spent a good month or two in China before he could really understand what the locals were saying. But don't worry. If you keep it up, you'll get it. Until then, practice the phrase Wǒ bù míngbái. (I don't understand.)

The first two parts of this phrase are words you have seen before: wǒ (I) and bù (no). The verb in this phrase is míngbái, which means to understand. The phrase is literally "I no understand." (I don't understand.)

Most people don't speak in isolated, four syllable phrases. In the lesson, we asked you to try to add Bù hǎo yìsī. (I'm sorry or I feel bad) onto the beginning of Wǒ bù míngbái. This will make you sound more fluid and also more polite. (It is nice when a foreigner comes your country for them to apologize for not speaking your language.) Literally, Bù hǎo yìsī. means "no good meaning." As was mentioned in a previous lesson, Bù hǎo yìsī. is used as an apology or to say excuse me. Together, these two phrases become: "I'm sorry. I don't understand."

"Wǒ bù huì shuō zhōngwén." means I don't speak Chinese. Huì is a verb that indicates the ability to do something. (Huì also has other meanings, but we will try not to confuse you.) Generally huì refers to having knowledge or a certain skill. It is not used when the ability to do something is based on physical ability (for example a task that requires a certain amount of physical strength). You can place huì before another verb to say that you (or another subject) have the ability to do the second verb. In this phrase the second verb is shuō. Shuō means to say or to speak. Huì shuō means to be able to speak. In this sentence we combine the noun zhōngwén with the verb shuō. Zhōngwén means Chinese. Literally, this noun can be broken into two pieces: zhōng and wén. Zhōng means middle. In ancient times the Chinese believed their land was the center of the world, thus the Chinese word for China is Zhōngguó (middle kingdom). In Chinese the character zhōng is used to indicate all things Chinese. Wén means language, literature, or culture. Put together, Zhōngwén literally means "middle language" or the language of the middle kingdom. Thus we get the word Zhōngwén, which means the Chinese language. Zhōngwén can be attached onto the end of the verb shuō (to speak) to make the compound verb phrase "to speak Chinese." Notice that this is just like English. You just add the word for a certain language after the verb "to speak." This can be done in exactly the same way for any language



Lesson 10: Apologies

对不起。Duì bùqǐ.

LESSON NOTES

Many foreigners coming to China speak no Chinese at all. (Well, besides a garbled "Nǐ hǎo ma?") Chinese people have come to expect this from foreigners on the street. Most Chinese people will not say anything to you if they are trying to get past you or would like you to move out of the way. Some wave their hands to indicate they'd like you to move, some lower their head and just try to push through. Some Chinese people will even say "I'm sorry." or "Excuse me." in English when squeezing past you on a crowded bus. This lesson is your chance to shock complete strangers. Saying "Sorry." or "Excuse me." in Chinese ("Duì bùqǐ." or "Bùhǎo yìsī.") will make people do a double-take as you pass. Saying "Méi wèn tí." ("No problem.") in response to their English "I'm sorry." will make their eyes go wide. It may even elicit a stunned "Your Chinese is really good." To which you can respond with the "Xièxiè." we have already learned. Other people don't have to know that you've just started learning. (Chinese people in general have very low expectations for foreigners' Chinese levels, especially when they are taken by surprise in public. Often a couple words in understandable Chinese are enough to get a "Your Chinese is very good.") "Duì bùqǐ." means "I'm sorry." or "Excuse me." "Bùhǎo yìsī." can be broken into three separate words: bù (no) hǎo (good) yìsī (meaning). Altogether this would be "No good meaning." "Bùhǎo yìsī." actually means something more like "I feel bad." and can also be used as "I'm sorry." or "Excuse me." Teaching a language we feel that we have a responsibility to give you ways to distinguish between words that have very similar meanings. In the lesson we tried to do this. The truth is, the difference is miniscule. If you want to, you can use the two words interchangeably. If you must distinguish between them, the difference is that "Duì bùqǐ." is more often used as an apology, whereas "Bùhǎo yìsī." more often is used the way English speakers use "Excuse me." However, just like in English where "I'm sorry." and "Excuse me." can often be used in the same situations, "Bùhǎo yìsī." and "Duì bùqǐ." can always be switched out for one another. Let's look at some examples:

You're riding the subway. You can't remember the name of the station that you're supposed to get off at. You pull out your little notebook where you've written down the name of the station. While you're still flipping through your book, the subway pulls into the next station and the brakes come on. The sudden decrease in speed causes you to lose your balance a little. You take a couple steps to your right, trying to regain your balance, but your foot lands squarely on the leather shoe of a man sitting in the seats in front of you. He looks up at you surprised, sees you're a foreigner, and immediately gives up any hope of communication. In this case, both forms are equally acceptable. For many people "Duì bùqǐ." might be more natural because it is used a little more often as an apology, but "Bùhǎo yìsī." would also be totally fine. Both will probably



Lesson 51: Self Introduction

我叫Michael。Wǒ jiào Michael.

LESSON NOTES

Lots of people say Chinese people are rude, but actually most Chinese people are very friendly. The biggest problem is that almost all Chinese people cannot speak English. They assume there is no way for them to communicate with foreigners, so they tend to ignore you. (Or just stare.) Once you do break the ice, once you show that you're a real person, they will become incredibly welcoming. Sometimes they seem overly friendly. They will invite you out for dinner (and insist on paying), they will want your phone number and email address, they will want to know all about you and introduce you to all their friends. It is only the language barrier that turns these normally very friendly people into a mass of cold shoulders.

Today's lesson is the start of breaking the ice. Once the ice is broken you will find people are very patient with any problems you are having in Chinese, but first you have to get introduced. In the lesson, Michael went over two ways to say "My name is." These can be used if you are meeting new people on your own or if you're being introduced by a third party. The first phrase is "Wǒ jiào (your name)." This literally means "I am called..." "Wǒ" means "I" or "me." "jiào" means "to call." Together "Wǒ jiào" is "I am called." (Michael used his name as an example. The whole sentence was "Wǒ jiào Michael.")

Another way to introduce yourself is to say "Wǒ shì (your name)." This literally means "I am..." It's "Wǒ" again plus "shì," which means "to be." (Using the example "Michael," the phrase is "Wǒ shì Michael.") After you introduce yourself you can ask the people you are talking to their name. There was no time to go over this in the lesson, but that's why we have the PDFs. A simple way to ask another person's name is to just take the first phrase from today, replace the "Wǒ" with "nǐ" (which means "you"), and put "shénme" at the end to make it a question. "shénme" means "what." The new phrase is then "nǐ jiào shénme?" Literally, "You called what?" but it means "What are you called?" or "What is your name?" To this they will respond with their name. Because you have used the word "jiào," they will probably use "jiào" in their response. They will probably say "Wǒ jiào (their name)." It is customary in China to introduce yourself with just your last name. It is probably safe to assume (especially if the person you are talking to is over 30) that the name the person gives you is their family name. They will say something like "Wǒ jiào Wáng." "Wáng" is a very common Chinese last name. They may also say "Wǒ Xìng Wáng." This means "My last name is Wáng." "Xìng" means "last name" or "family name." (There are many different ways for people to introduce themselves as well as many ways for them to ask your name. We can't possibly hope to teach them all now, so good luck, and stay on your toes.)

Chinese Character	Pinyin	English
弟弟	dìdì	younger brother
哥哥	gégé	older brother
妹妹	mèimèi	younger sister
姐姐	jiějie	older sister

QUICK TIP

Chinese people love to use nicknames. It is very common practice to add "xiǎo" or "lǎo" in front of the last name of someone you are friendly with. (This should only be done in informal situations.) "xiǎo" means "little" and "lǎo" means "old." An older person (named Wáng) can be called Lǎo Wáng. Someone who is young is xiǎo Wáng. Often this is kind of a joke, people will call someone who is still quite young, but older than them, lǎo Wáng. People might call someone who acts too serious lǎo Wáng to make fun of their attitude. Someone whose is old, but acts youthful could be called xiǎo Wáng.

Chinese people also like to give people fake family titles. A woman who is older than you might be called "jiějie" or "Wáng jiějie." ("jiějie" means "older sister.") Chinese people use these nicknames to indicate friendliness and a close relationship with one another. A younger man could be called "dìdì." ("Younger brother.") Chinese people also commonly use "gégé" or "dàgé" ("older brother") and "mèimèi" ("younger sister"), as well many other names for relatives. But remember this is very informal, and usually starts as the drinks begin to flow.

QUICK TIP 2

Chinese people don't bow. Do not make this mistake. (Other Asian cultures do it too and the Chinese used to do it. The wait staff at fancy restaurants still do it, but you don't want to mimic the wait staff.) Chinese people shake hands now. Bowing will make you look silly and possibly embarrass the people you are meeting.